

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTARY

In May of 2003 I decided to focus my frustration and anger, taking my pile of collected articles and scribbled notes, to try to tell the story of our reckless neo-conservative administration's march to war, of the unmitigated failure of our press, some who acted more like courtesans than journalists, and also of the tragedy that results when young men and women are asked to engage violently with strangers in a hostile land.

Embedded Live was born as a play, which we first performed in a 30-seat theater in Los Angeles in July 2003. The response was intense and immediate, the laughter nervous and angry. *Embedded Live* became a film because of that first audience and every audience we've played to since, from Los Angeles and New York City to London to a national tour in the United States. It was not critical acceptance that led to the filming of this story but rather the negative reviews, the hostile attacks of the media establishment, the soldier crying in my arms in the lobby of the theater, the people who traveled 1,000 miles to see it, the vibrant audience discussions after the play and the encouragement and support of war correspondents recently returned from Iraq.

They gave us the mandate to perform *Embedded* and they gave us the mandate to film it. Is it theater? Is it a film? Documentary? I don't know. What I do know is that it is a moment captured, a moment that is still with us. Now, after almost 1,600 Americans and 100,000 Iraqi civilians have died, after our actions have increased recruitment for terrorist groups worldwide and alienated our most trusted Allies, now that our press finally reports what I and others read three years ago in the alternative press and British newspapers, now is the time for American artists to tell truth to power. Whether through satire, documentaries, pop songs or films, whether these stories are seen by many or ignored, whether they are loved or reviled, now is the time to testify, to stand up and be counted.